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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 SANAA 000728

SIPDIS

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RALPH HORTON AND DEBBIE MANCHAS)

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/28/2014

TAGS: [PTER](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [YM](#) [COUNTER](#) [TERRORISM](#) [MARITIME](#) [SECURITY](#)

SUBJECT: PRESENTATION OF INCOMING LEGATT TO MINISTER OF  
INTERIOR

Classified By: CTC AUSTIN G. GILREATH, for reasons 1.5 (b) and (d).

1. (U) Summary: On 27 March 2004, The Ambassador met with  
ROYG Minister of the Interior Rashad al-Alimi to present  
newly arrived LEGATT and discuss security subjects. Alimi  
warmly welcomed LEGATT, and listed a number of issues on  
which MOI sought cooperation with LEGATT. Also present at  
the meeting were MOI Office Director Sunidar, DCM, ARSO and  
Embassy Counterterrorism Coordinator. End summary.

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LEGATT WELL-RECEIVED  
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2. (C) Minister Alimi welcomed LEGATT warmly and stated  
that a new chapter of cooperation was beginning in ROYG-USG  
relations. Alimi identified MOI Office Director General  
Sunidar as the LEGATT's primary point of contact for future  
interaction. As a first instance of cooperation, Alimi  
requested LEGATT/FBI assistance in investigating the case of  
a Yemeni arrested in December 2003 who confessed to stabbing  
three foreigners (none U.S. citizens) in Sana'a. The man  
claimed extreme religious views and was found to be in  
possession of \$60,000 USD, but the MOI was unclear as to his  
true motives or connection to outside financial support and  
requested assistance to include a possible polygraph  
examination. Alimi further requested LEGATT assistance in  
the formation of MOI's nascent counter-terrorism unit and CT  
Operations Center.

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OTHER SECURITY ISSUES  
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3. (U) The Ambassador informed Alimi that the  
American-supplied Yemeni Coast Guard (YCG) boats would be  
officially commissioned in a ceremony in Aden on 7 April  
2004. The YCG would assume total responsibility for  
maintaining maritime security on the two refineries and free  
port zone in Aden. The Ambassador and Alimi both agreed that  
the YCG would serve well to increase interest and  
international support in Yemeni maritime security issues.

4. (C) The Ambassador thanked Alimi for the additional  
security provided by the MOI to the Embassy in March during  
the ROYG's highly successful CT/security operations in Abyan  
and during the aftermath of the Shaykh Yassin assassination.

5. (C) The Ambassador briefed Alimi on the proposed  
INL-sponsored anti-riot training module that would be  
provided to police forces in Sana'a. Alimi was very  
receptive to the proposed training and acknowledged that it  
was sorely needed given past performance. (Comment: Alimi  
was likely referring to anti-U.S. demonstrations that  
occurred approximately 1/4 mile from the Embassy on March 2,  
2003, during Operation Iraqi Freedom, resulting in the death  
of several protesters and injuries to police. End comment)

6. (U) CT Coordinator briefed Alimi on an upcoming Export  
and Border Security (EXBS) Conference to be held in Malta on  
11-14 May, and invited the ROYG to identify 4-6 individuals  
for sponsored participation. Alimi responded favorably.

7. (C) The Ambassador briefed Alimi that the Embassy would  
be holding a regional chiefs of mission conference in Sana'a  
in late April. Alimi commented that such a conference was a  
positive step and would be well-received. He offered  
assurance of security escorts and assistance as needed.

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IRAN EXPLOITING YASSIN ASSASSINATION  
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8. (C) Alimi told the Ambassador that recent extremist

activity and anti-U.S. vitriol at the grand mosques in Sa'dah and Sana'a was due to Government of Iran (GOI) involvement. Alimi said the GOI was providing instructors and financial assistance to elements who sought to exploit and expound anti-Western sentiment, particularly in the aftermath of the Yassin assassination.

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ABU SHAHEED FOLLOW-UP  
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19. (C) Alimi confirmed that the Political Security Organization (PSO) had recently arrested Abu al-Shaheed and had begun questioning him on his involvement in terrorist activities in Yemen. Alimi commented that Shaheed had openly wept during interrogation and expressed his desire at reconciliation. Alimi said he himself had interviewed Shaheed, but that Shaheed remained in PSO custody. Because Shaheed had given himself up after negotiations with ROYG Security Forces, and was cooperating with interrogators, Alimi said he believed that this may indicate a positive future trend in which those suspected of terrorist activities would turn themselves in rather than be subjected to ROYG manhunts.  
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